



CALFED BAY-DELTA PROGRAM

Commonly Asked Questions

What Is CALFED?

A group of state and federal agencies with management and regulatory responsibility in the Bay-Delta system are working together as CALFED. Agencies participating in CALFED include: California Resources Agency, California Department of Water Resources, California Department of Fish and Game, California Environmental Protection Agency, California State Water Resources Control Board, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

What Is the Bay-Delta System?

An intricate web of waterways created at the junction of the San Francisco Bay with California's two largest rivers, the Sacramento and the San Joaquin, and the watershed that feeds them. The system contains the largest estuary on the west coast. It is a beautiful, lush, and varied ecosystem. It is also the hub of California's water system.

What Is the CALFED Bay-Delta Program?

It is a cooperative effort among state and federal agencies and the public to ensure a healthy ecosystem, reliable water supplies, good quality water, and stable levees in California's Bay-Delta system. The CALFED Bay-Delta program mission is to develop a long-term comprehensive plan that will restore ecological health and improve water management for beneficial uses of the Bay-Delta system.

Why Is the Bay-Delta Important?

The Bay-Delta system is a critically important part of California's natural environment and economy. It supplies drinking water for more than 20 million Californians and irrigates more than four million

acres of the world's most productive farmland producing, for example, 45 percent of the nation's fruits and vegetables. It supports 120 fish and wildlife species; some found nowhere else on the planet. Ultimately, California's trillion-dollar economy, the seventh largest in the world, is at risk if Bay-Delta system environmental and water management problems are not resolved.

What's the Problem?

California is a semi-arid state with urban and agricultural regions dependent on water imported from the Bay-Delta system. For the past 150 years, development activities such as hydraulic mining, dredging and channelization, flood control, pollution, and large-scale water supply projects have contributed to the environmental deterioration of the Bay-Delta system and a decline in its water quality.

Today the Bay-Delta system is in serious trouble. Habitats are declining, and several native species are endangered. The system no longer serves as a source of high-quality water. Water supplies are no longer reliable. Delta levees are structurally deteriorated and face an unacceptably high risk of breaching. These problems threaten this tremendous ecological and economic resource.

How Did We Get in This Predicament?

The Bay-Delta system has for decades been the focus of competing interests — economic, environmental, urban and agricultural. Planning efforts to solve Bay-Delta system problems have suffered from gridlock as the system continued to deteriorate. Though many efforts have been made to address the Delta's problems over the years, many problems remain unresolved.

How Are These Problems Being Addressed?

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program addresses four categories of problems: ecosystem quality, water quality, water supply reliability, and system vulnerability. The program is being completed in three phases. Phase I, from June 1995 through August 1996, identified problems and three conceptual alternatives for solving them. Phase II is underway, and includes a programmatic level environmental review of the three alternative solutions, as well as selection of a preferred alternative. Phase III, targeted to begin in late 1998 or early 1999, will implement the preferred alternative.

Each alternative is a combination of actions (e.g. habitat restoration, new storage, policy changes, etc.) that together address the critical problems facing the Bay-Delta system. Each presents options for water storage, as well as a system for moving, or conveying, water through and/or around the Delta. The three alternative solutions continue to be refined through technical evaluation and input from the public, the Bay-Delta Advisory Council (a federally chartered public advisory committee), and the CALFED agencies.

How Much Is This Going To Cost?

Current estimates are that full implementation of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program will cost between \$4 billion and \$8 billion to be raised and spent over a period of 20-30 years. Such a funding commitment will provide long-term water supply security for over 50 million current and future Californians, as well as water supply reliability for the state's trillion dollar economy. One of the unique aspects of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program is that a strategy for funding the long term solution is being developed as an integral part of the overall program. This concept relates to the solution principle concerning implementability. Neither one sector of society nor one revenue source will shoulder complete responsibility for paying to implement the ultimate solution alternative. Rather, the cost will be shared by many entities, possibly including user fees, federal appropriations, private-public partnerships and general obligation bonds.

Where Will the Money Come From?

Financing will be raised over the next few decades. The people of California are committed to improving the Delta. This is evidenced by the passage of Proposition 204 in 1996, which provided more than \$450 million for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program's environmental enhancement efforts. Federal authorization for an additional \$430 million over the next three-year period has also been secured. In October 1997 President Bill Clinton signed an energy and water development appropriations bill containing \$85 million for the Bay-Delta system. This funding for early implementation of the Program's environmental actions reflects the fundamental need to restore the ecosystem as an essential component of a comprehensive solution to Bay-Delta system problems.

Who Is Administering Current and Future Funds?

The CALFED agencies' management is ultimately charged with administering the Program's funds.

How Long Will it Take To Solve the Problems?

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program focuses on resolving both long-term and immediate problems. While the full CALFED solution will be implemented over as many as 30 years, significant improvements are expected to begin in 1999, after the initial environmental review process is complete.

Where Are We Today?

CALFED is currently in Phase II of the process, a programmatic environmental review of the three alternative solutions. In the winter of 1997, a preferred solution will be released as a draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement for public review.

Is the Public Involved?

Yes! CALFED is working with urban and agricultural water users, fishing interests, environmental organizations, businesses and the public to define and evaluate alternatives for solving the problems confronting the Bay-Delta system. Already, thousands of Californians have contributed to the Bay-Delta Program by volunteering time, sharing expertise, and expressing ideas and opinions. In addition, a group of more than 30 water leaders from the State's leading urban, agricultural, business and environmental interests are serving as members of the Bay-Delta Advisory Council.

What's My Role?

Each of us has an unprecedented opportunity to get involved in solving the environmental and water management problems of the Bay-Delta system. Active participation and understanding of the issues by all Bay-Delta system interest groups and the public will be key to success. For further information on how you can participate in the restoration of the California Bay-Delta system, contact: CALFED, 1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155, Sacramento, CA 95814 ph: (916) 657-2666 Fax: (916) 654-9780 Public Information Line

1-800-700-5752, Website: <http://calfed.ca.gov>

CALFED Agencies

California

The Resources Agency
Department of Fish and Game
Department of Water Resources
California Environmental Protection Agency
State Water Resources Control Board

Federal

Environmental Protection Agency
Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Department of Commerce
National Marine Fisheries Service